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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOOD AND DRUG SUPPLY -- NO. 6.

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A radio talk by W. W. Vincent, chief, western district, Food and Drug Administration, delivered Thursday, July 10, 1930, through Stations KGO, San Francisco, KECA, Los Angeles and KHQ, Spokane, at 9:45 A.M. Pacific Standard Time.

My Friends, for five weeks I have been telling you of my experiences with fake foods and drugs and I have been telling you how to read food and drug labels. Last week I offered to send to all who wrote to me copies of a paper written for that army of label readers who might be seeking more information on the subject of their food and drug supply. My talk also stressed the necessity, in the case of medicines, of giving credit to only those statements which actually appeared upon your package labels and of reading even these, when fulsome in their promises, with caution because while you are considering their purchase you have no way of knowing whether the product is under investigation preparatory to legal action. In my talk today I will tell you a story of cloves, worthless cloves, of course intended for sale as good ones.

I will also tell you something of tea. When you buy tea I wonder if you always get exactly what you want. You may believe the tea labels tell the truth for the enforcement of the Import Tea Act and the Food and Drugs Act by the U. S. Department of Agriculture insures the truthful labeling of packages of tea. In order to purchase intelligently you should know that, first, there are three kinds of tea, namely, Green Tea, Semi-fermented Tea, and Black Tea. All tea come from the tea plant and represents the tender immature leaves after curing, either before or after fermentation, fired or dried, and rolled and thus made ready for your teapot. Green Tea is green in color. It is not fermented, just dried or cured, and rolled. Semi-fermented Tea is blackish in color, a partially fermented product, not quite so dark in color as is black tea, black tea being a fully fermented leaf. Commercial teas come from China, Japan, Formosa, India, Java, Ceylon and Sumatra and when these terms appear on labels they indicate the country of origin and with respect to the last four, namely, Java, India, Ceylon and Sumatra, give you information as to the kind of tea represented, that is, they are black teas, or fully fermented ones, from the country indicated. You have seen much advertising of "Orange Pekoe" Tea. Orange Pekoe merely represents a size of leaf from the tea plant. The five sizes into which East India Teas are generally divided are, first, the flowery Orange Pekoe, second, Orange Pekoe, third, Pekoe, fourth, Pekoe Souchong, and, fifth, Souchong. "Flowery Orange Pekoe" consists of the tenderest or smallest leaves taken from the tips of the tea plant while Souchong represents the largest or coarsest tea leaves from the bottom of the plant. Intermediate between these extremes, are found the other sizes in the order named. Mixtures of these sizes may be labeled "Pekoe and Orange Pekoe", or with similar names. You will see, therefore, that the name "Flowery Orange Pekoe" and "Orange Pekoe" do not imply the presence of flavors or scents derived from oranges or orange blossoms but are descriptive only of the size of the tea leaf. These names are in no wise significant of the cup quality of the tea.

In addition to the names I have given you, certain trade designations having definite meaning and significance are also used on the labels. For example, very high grade fully fermented China Black Teas are sometimes labeled "Kee-Mun-Congou". The terms "Gunpowder" and "Young Hyson", mean unfermented, - Chinese Green Tea, the "Gunpowder" being usually rolled into pellet shape. English

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Breakfast Tea - This designation means Chinese Black Tea fully fermented. "Formosa Oolong Tea" - A Semi-Fermented Tea from Formosa.

Formerly it was sometimes the practice to color teas with certain copper salts or lighten up by the use of talc certain teas that had been damaged in the curing process. The term "Uncolored Japan Tea" was originally used in all probability to indicate the absence of coloring matter. Under the strict enforcement of the Tea Act, of course, no artificial color is now employed.

The terms "pan-fired" and "basket-fired" if encountered upon labels indicate the product as unfermented green tea from Japan. You may buy a product labeled "Scented Tea" which upon brewing is aromatic in odor, an odor generally of flowers. Such teas have small amounts of dried Jasmine or other flowers added to them. Certain brick teas are sometimes encountered. These are generally formed by first steaming the fully fermented leaves and thereafter pressing into brick shape. They occupy an important place in the tea trade of Russia.

Some "Ceremonial" teas occasionally enter the U. S. They bear no English labels, being used solely by Japanese. A very high value is frequently placed upon these "Ceremonial" teas because of sentimental factors attached. Such tea appears only at special functions such as weddings, important banquets, etc.

When the term "High Altitude" appears on a tea label it means the tea has been grown in a high altitude and usually is of a superior quality. The term "Garden" where appearing upon a label has reference to a tea estate. It offers nothing as a guide of quality for the consumer. Remember, folks, all teas imported into the U. S. are given a very careful inspection and cup test made by your agents in the Department of Agriculture. If they contain impurities they are excluded from the country. Likewise, they are excluded if they fall below the standards set by the Department of Agriculture under the Tea Law. Some tea dust is brought into the country under restrictions that insure its use for technical purposes, such as the extraction of caffeine for the drug trade.

Now for my clove story. Cloves are those small dried flower buds which you employ in your kitchen in the flavoring of your sauces, pickled peaches and baked ham. Immense quantities are annually imported into the U. S. They are grown largely in Africa. Cloves are the principal export of Zanzibar.

Could you imagine that a clove could be adulterated within the meaning of the Food and Drugs Act? I will answer the question. It can, by abstracting its valuable constituent, namely, the volatile oil, or oil of cloves. Oil of cloves is utilized in large amounts in this country as a flavoring ingredient, as the base of clove extract. The oil is distilled from the cloves by simply placing them in large stills and submitting to steam distillation or solvent action if desired. The clove is left identical in shape but not so shiny in appearance, due to the oil no longer being present.

Several years back your Food and Drug agent located two carloads, or 760 bales, representing an aggregate of 56 tons of these extracted cloves on the dock at San Francisco. Inquiry as to where they were going and from whence they came, revealed it to be a rush shipment from Philadelphia to San Francisco destined to catch a certain boat to sail the following night. Their final des-

tinuation was Persia. Certain Parsees, influential factors in the clove trade of the world, were to receive them. The exporter was located. His answers as to their ultimate use were vague. He was receiving a fancy price for the material.

There could be but one use to which these cloves were to be put that would warrant such a price. The Persians were going to mix these cloves with good cloves. The oil exuding from the good cloves would quickly cover these from which the oil had been extracted. Clearly here was an intent to adulterate in foreign markets probably an amount of five or six hundred tons of cloves, since these 56 tons would probably be mixed with good cloves to an amount of 10 pounds worthless with 90 pounds of good. As the shipment stood it was in violation of the Food and Drugs Act since an extracted clove is of little or no value, except for firewood. The Food and Drugs Act must be invoked and quickly. The cars were being unloaded upon the dock. The ship would load the next day. The inspector rushed his sample to the laboratory. The chemist worked far into the night and found less than one percent of oil of cloves remaining. Good cloves contain not less than 15%. Telegrams were dispatched and the following morning a libel of condemnation from the Federal Court put the material in the hands of the U. S. Marshal.

The exporter was frantic. He had contracted so many bales of cloves for that particular ship. He rushed into Federal Court, admitted the Government's charges, and placed a bond insuring they would not be disposed of contrary to the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act. Your Food and Drug Department was arbitrary. The only way those cloves could be brought into compliance with the Food and Drugs Act or exported was by denaturing. In desperation the exporter finally consented to a denaturing with fuel oil. A crew of 25 men was employed. Each of the 760 bales was cut open and contents thoroughly saturated with fuel oil. Throughout the night, your Food and Drug Inspector supervised the oiling, but you can rest assured those 25 men doing the job for the exporter saw to it on their own behalf that the job was well done. Thereafter each bale was sewed up and delivered to the Steamship Company.

The Captain of the foreign vessel did not choose to receive such a dangerous consignment on board. It took much persuasion and probably some additional money on the part of the exporter to get his cargo aboard. We do not know what happened to the cloves upon arrival in Persia. We know, however, their condition prevented their admixture with good cloves and can assume some disappointed Parsees received that material. The clever exporter sustained a loss of both money and sleep and thereafter discontinued the sale of exhausted spices. Credit here to the Food and Drugs Act a solar plexus blow on another form of cheat. Years ago it was not at all uncommon to find your ground spices adulterated. Ground cocoanut shells and ground olive pits provided fine material with which to adulterate ground cinnamon, ground cloves and pepper.

Actions that have been brought under the Food and Drugs Act have resulted in a substantial degree of purity of the spices on the American market at the present time. Adulteration of spices is very, very rare today. Today some sellers of spices cheat you in an easier manner. It's your own fault, too, because you probably have not "Read the Label". I refer to the slack-filled package. Most ground spices are packed in more or less uniform sized tins. I

have seen the same size tin as packed by one manufacturer contain two ounces whereas his competitor's product in a similar tin contained but one ounce. The Food and Drugs Act is mandatory in requiring all food in package for to bear a plain and conspicuous statement of net weight. Had the purchaser compared the labels, he would have readily seen that one manufacturer was giving twice the amount his competitor was, and in the same size package. If you would become a discriminating buyer, it behooves you to read the net contents statements appearing upon all packages of food. The largest package does not insure the best bargain. Remember, as a buyer you must beware.

You are a stockholder in the Federal Food and Drugs Administration and are entitled to know about the organization. Write today to W. W. Vincent, U. S. Food and Drug Laboratory, San Francisco, California. Ask for our "Read the Label" information on Tea. If you are a new label reader you also will receive all my previous issues of food and drug facts.

Next Thursday at this hour, I shall tell you about the rise, decline and fall of the egg substitute game, and about taking rotten and mouldy berries out of bakery pies - as well as more about how to read labels.